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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 EB-08 AID-05
OMB-01 TRSE-00 COME-00 STR-07 /085 W
----------012884 100326Z /70
R 091216Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7374
INFO AMEMBSSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PINR, GY
SUBJECT: NINETEEN INDICTED IN ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN

REF: GEORGETOWN 2412

1. SIXTEEN INDIVIDUALS WERE CHARGED ON AUGUST 4 WITH CONSPIRACY TO FRADULENTLY OBTAIN OVER US$2.5 MILLION IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE DURING 1975 AND 1976. BAIL WAS SET AT APPROXIMATELY US$40,000, A VERY LARGE SUM BY GUYANESE STANDARDS. THOSE CHARGED INCLUDE FORMER MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE WILLIAM HAYNES, PERMANENT SECRETARY OF THE GUYANA STATE CORPORATION (GUYSTAC) FRANK NOEL, A PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF TRADE, A POLICE DETECTIVE, SEVERAL PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN, AND THE BERBICE MANAGER OF THE GUYANA NATIONAL CO-OP BANK. THE DEFENDANTS WERE ORDERED TO RETURN TO COURT ON AUGUST 19.

2. THREE INDIVIDUALS (TWO EMPLOYEES OF THE MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND A PRIVATE CONTRACTOR) WERE CHARGED ON THE SAME DAY WITH CONSPIRACY TO DEFRAUD THE
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GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA OF APPROXIMATELY US$16,000 IN 1976. THEY WERE PLACED ON BAIL OF APPROXIMATELY US$6,000 AND ORDERED TO APPEAR IN COURT ON SEPTEMBER 5.

3. ACCORDING TO THE "GUYANA CHRONICLE", A SPECIAL COURT IS BEING ESTABLISHED TO ENSURE A SPEEDY TRIAL FOR THE ACCUSED. ALL OF THOSE CHARGED HAVE BEEN APPREHENDED,

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WITH THE EXCEPTION OF HAYNES, WHO IT IS BELIEVED IS OUT
OF THE COUNTRY.

4. COMMENT: THE VARIED EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND OF THOSE
CHARGED IS EVIDENCE OF THE EXTENT OF MISDEEDS IN GUYANA
STEMMING FROM GOVERNMENTAL CONTROLS ON FOREIGN EXCHANGE
AND IMPORT CONTROLS (REFTEL). RELIABLE SOURCES HAVE IN-
FORMED THE EMBASSY THAT INDICTMENTS ON OTHER INDIVIDUALS
HAVE BEEN PENDING FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, LENDING CREDENCE TO
BURNHAM'S HINT DURING HIS PRESS CONFERENCE ON AUGUST 5
THAT MORE ARRESTS CAN BE EXPECTED. IN THIS LIGHT, THE
SHAKE-UP OF GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL, INCLUDING THE RESIGNA-
TION OF THE MINISTER OF TRADE (SEPTEL) IS PROBABLY NOT
MERELY COINCIDENTAL. OF FURTHER INTEREST IS THE TIMING
OF THE PROSECUTIONS. BURNHAM ELECTED TO WAIT UNTIL
AFTER THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM TO TAKE ACTION, BUT
HE DID NOT WAIT FOR THE RULING PNC PARTY EXECUTIVE CON-
FERENCE, SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 10-12.
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